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ABSTRACT

A study determined the existing vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and trust territories. A survey instrument collected data from the 55 state vocational special-needs consultants. The response rate was 85 percent (47 persons). Conclusions were that most states do not issue vocational/special education certification for vocational and special education personnel; coursework and occupational work experience are primary requirements for certification; undergraduate and graduate coursework is used to satisfy requirements for extended certification; most states offer K-12 special education certification; postsecondary or adult special education certification is almost non-existent; very few states waive the occupational work experience requirement for vocational education certification; a limited number of states require vocational educators to complete special education courses for vocational certification; competency-based teacher certification is having an impact on certification policies and practices; materials are needed by state leadership and planning personnel to aid in developing vocational/special education policies and practices; and, a need exists for state, regional, and national level conferences to assist state personnel in developing, implementing, and evaluating vocational/special education policies and practices. (The instrument is appended.) (YLB)

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Vocational/Special Education Certification: An Analysis of State Policies and Practices

Policy Research and Resource Series: Document 10

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May 1982

Foreword

In the mid 1970s, the passage of Public Laws 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) and 94-482 (The Education Amendments of 1976 - Title II: Vocational Education) created major changes in vocational education and special education. The developers of the legislation clearly recognized the need for the training and retraining of professionals in bringing about these changes. The extent to which Public Laws 94-142 and 94-482 are fully implemented continues to depend heavily upon the knowledge, expertise, and competencies of teachers, administrators and supervisors, related services personnel, counselors, and others. Assuring that a free and appropriate public education is available to all handicapped persons is contingent upon the development of effective policies for the training and certification of professionals responsible for implementing the laws.

One of the major provisions of Public Law 94-142 was the requirement for local and state education agencies to develop a comprehensive system for personnel development (CSPD) as part of their annual plans for education of the handicapped. The CSPD is essentially a state planning document which includes a description of programs and procedures for the development and implementation of comprehensive personnel development. The CSPD may also include certification policies, procedures, and practices.

The need for comprehensive vocational education services for all handicapped individuals and appropriately certified personnel has also been acknowledged as an integral part of special education and Public Law 94-142 (Federal Register, September 25, 1978). Further, it has

been noted that special educators generally lack expertise in preparing their students for vocational and career-oriented objectives. Conversely, vocational educators generally lack expertise in dealing with the unique learning and behavioral problems of handicapped adolescents (Clark & Evans, 1977). In many states, progress has been made in bringing these two groups of professionals together in practice as well as in training programs.

In September of 1981, the staff of the Leadership Training Institute/Vocational and Special Education considered the prospect of examining the certification policies and practices of the states regarding the combined field of vocational/special education. Following the development of a prospectus for the study and several positive responses from State Education Agency personnel and teacher educators, the study was initiated. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of certification policies and practices. Significant recommendations are made for reviewing and improving the focus upon vocational/special education certification at the state level.

The LTI is indebted to Dr. James P. Greenan and Dave Larkin for designing and conducting the study. The reviewers provided numerous helpful and insightful comments and recommendations during the planning and instrument development stages and review of the draft report. The reviewers included:

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Introduction

Nature of the Problem

The field of education has recently begun to focus more attention on providing special needs learners with appropriately designed instructional programs and support services. This focus has been particularly evident in vocational education and special education. Existing federal educational legislation (Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975; Public Law 94-482, The Education Amendments of 1976-Title II: Vocational Education) have required that special needs learners receive individualized education programs (IEP), be placed in least restrictive learning environments, and provided with the support services and supplementary aids necessary for them to succeed in regular vocational programs. To accomplish these goals, vocational education and special education personnel will continue to require adequate preparation that will enable them to develop the skills and positive attitudes necessary for working with special needs learners.

However, personnel preparation continues to be an important problem confronting vocational and special education (Rude, 1978; Schofer & Duncan, 1978; Phelps & Thornton, 1979; Howard, 1979; Greenan & Phelps, 1980; Greenan, Cobb, & Batchelor, 1981). In addition, the current legislation suggests little with respect to certification (the process of personnel licensure) of vocational and special education personnel. Further certification has been traditionally an area of the states' concern, although professional associations such as the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) have provided some national direction. However, states generally have had minimal guidelines for

developing policy in terms of how to develop, implement, and evaluate criteria and procedures by which personnel obtain certification.

There is some evidence which suggests that vocational education and special education personnel in the states are increasingly receiving training relative to the education of special needs learners. Brock (1979) cited an increase in the number of states requiring special education training (e.g., coursework) for vocational personnel as well as an increased awareness of training programs in the area of vocational/special education. Further, the study revealed that a larger number of educators were enrolling in, and completing programs in vocational/special education. However, the extent of vocational education that was required for special education personnel was not readily known. In summary, the results of the study seemed to imply that although the states were improving their personnel preparation efforts, vocational/special education certification policy and practices appeared generally to be non-systematic and inconsistent among states.

States may approach the problem differently but the presence of handicapped, disadvantaged, limited English-proficient, and other special populations in vocational programs would appear to require a restructuring of certification requirements for vocational/special education personnel. Vocational educators tend to be technically or occupationally oriented and are commonly unaware of the needs of special needs students (Hull, 1979). Therefore, when special needs students are present in their classes, they often do not know how to deal with students' learning problems that arise. Special educators are generally student-oriented but are commonly unaware of career development patterns and processes, vocations, or occupations. Hence, the special

educator finds it difficult to make programmatic suggestions in the vocational component of the IEP; or suggest modifications in vocational curriculum, facilities, and equipment. While a solution to this problem may be to develop and deliver various kinds of preservice and inservice activities, vocational and special education personnel are sometimes resistant to crossing into each other's fields.

Special education courses have become requirements for vocational education personnel in 14 states according to Brock (1979). For example, in 1979, the State of Illinois General Assembly enacted a law requiring that individuals applying after September 1, 1981, for the early childhood, elementary, special, or high school certificate must complete coursework in specific areas concerning exceptional children. The law reads as follows:

> "Sec. 21-2a. Required curriculum for all teachers. After September 1, 1981, in addition to all other requirements, the successful completion of coursework which includes instruction on the psychology of the exceptional child, the identification of the exceptional child, including, but not limited to the learning disabled and methods of instruction for the exceptional child, including, but not limited to the learning disabled shall be a prerequisite to a person receiving any of the following certificates; early childhood, elementary, special and high school."

Specifically, the Illinois State Teacher Certification Board has recommended to the Illinois State Board of Education that the following rule be adopted in order to implement this law:

> "Coursework, equivalent to three (3) semester hours, on the psychology of exceptional children, identification of exceptional children, and methods of teaching exceptional children. Learning disabilities must be explicitly included in this coursework."

These courses also frequently include information in areas such as learner characteristics, teaching methods, and behavior modification.

Similarly, special educators are sometimes present in vocational courses and/or may have occupational work experiences that help he or she in relating to the vocational program. These courses and experiences provide vocational and special educators with a fundamental knowledge and understanding of learning styles, teaching strategies, and vocational curriculum and assist them in cooperating while working with the special needs student in the regular vocational program. When coursework is not recommended or required for vocational and special education personnel, an alternative strategy has been the infusion of special needs topics in existing coursework to provide an opportunity for practicing or future teachers to acquire similar competencies for working with special needs learners. Such training could impact on the twenty-five percent of high school students who do not graduate with the standard high school diploma. This proportion of dropouts has been static for a decade and now seems to be rising in some states (Evans, 1982). Training would enable teachers to better meet a wide range of individual students' needs. Vocational education personnel need sufficient knowledge and skill to enable them to work with special needs students who will be enrolled in their courses (Holmes & Omvig, 1975).

In summary, neither does the current legislation provide useful guidelines nor is there sufficient research and literature pertaining to issues and practices in the area of vocational/special education certification. The minimal literature which does exist suggests that little is known about this area. Information with respect to vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the states such as current certification options, coursework and occupational work

experience requirements, and legislative issues and policies could assist state leadership personnel in developing, implementing, and evaluating effective state certification policies and procedures in the area of vocational/special education certification. As special needs learners are increasingly placed in regular vocational programs, the problem of adequately preparing vocational and special education personnel and establishing certification criteria and policies will become more important within states.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem investigated in this study was to determine existing vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and trust territories (Puerto Rico, Samoa, Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, and Virgin Islands). The specific research problem was to identify current vocational/special education certification policies and practices in areas that include: certification options and alternatives, coursework and occupational work experience requirements, and legislative issues and policies.

It was not the intent of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of existing vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the states. In addition, the study did not address how various groups in the states assess needs, plan for, and develop certification policies. This study specifically attempted to obtain baseline data with respect to current policies and practices in the area of vocational/special education in the states. The expectation was that this information would be helpful to state leadership personnel (state directors of vocational education, state directors of special education, state special needs consultants, state Comprehensive System of Personnel

Development (CSPD) officers, state certification board officers, teacher educators, state legislators, and policy makers at the state and local level) in developing effective vocational/special education policies and practices.

Objectives and Research Questions

The following objectives and research questions were developed to resolve the central problem of this study:

I. Determine the extent to which the states are issuing certification for vocational education and special education personnel in the area of vocational/special education.

   A. Do the states issue one or more certificates for vocational education personnel, and what are the requirements for certification in the area of vocational/special education?

   B. Do the states issue one or more certificates for special education personnel, and what are the requirements for certification in the area of vocational/special education?

II. Assess the extent to which undergraduate and graduate courses are used to meet the requirements of extended certifications (i.e., additional certification, for example, personnel who possess 7-12 vocational education certification and who wish to obtain 7-12 special education certification).

   C. Do undergraduate courses meet the requirements for extended certification(s), and may undergraduate and graduate courses be used in combination to meet the requirements for extended certification(s)?

III. Determine the current special education certification options in the states.

   D. What are the levels (e.g., K-6, 7-12) in which the states grant special education certification?

   E. What are the separate areas (e.g., mental retardation, learning disabilities) of special education certification in the states?

IV. Identify the states' vocational education certification policies in terms of work experience and course requirements.

F. Do the states waive work experience requirements for vocational education certification when a specified number of courses is completed, or when licensure is temporary or provisional?

G. Do the states presently require vocational educators to complete one or more special education courses before receiving certification, and are these additional course requirements necessary for vocational education certification?

V. Identify current legislative issues and policies affecting vocational/special education certification in the states.

H. Do the states have existing temporary certification policies that are presently under legislative or state department review, and how are current policies perceived by state leadership personnel?

I. To what extent is competency-based teacher certification having an impact on certification requirements in the states?

VI. Determine the extent to which the states are issuing or developing vocational/special education certification.

J. Do the states have a vocational/special education certification, and what agencies are presently developing or have established recommendations and/or procedures for certification?

K. Are the states interested in participating in a workshop to develop standards for vocational/special education certification?

L. Do the states have resources that could assist others in developing policies and practices in vocational/special education certification?

Significance of the Study

The preparation and certification of personnel continues to be an important problem facing vocational education and special education. The development of effective personnel training programs and activities, and vocational/special education certification policies and practices will greatly determine the extent to which special needs learners are

appropriately served in vocational education. However, the data presently suggest that although personnel preparation activities are expanding and improving, certification policies and practices appear to be incomplete and generally not serving the purpose of assuring that personnel are adequately prepared to work with special needs youth and adults in vocational settings.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in personnel preparation and certification by providing baseline data and information which identify current vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the states. Analysis of the existing certification policies and practices provides an indication of the various certification options, coursework and occupational work experience requirements, and legislative issues and policies affecting certification.

The data and information should be helpful to policy and decision-makers including: state education agency personnel, state legislators, and university and college personnel. The information could be useful for evaluating current individual state policies; and developing, implementing, and evaluating future policies. In addition, university and college personnel could use the data and information for planning programs, developing curricula, and working more cooperatively in personnel preparation/certification activities with SEA personnel. Further, the study could provide data for future state legislation, and allocating state appropriations.

Research Procedures

Several research procedures were used to achieve the major objectives and answer the research questions of this study. The procedures included: development of a survey instrument, selection of a population, collection of data, and analysis of the data. The research procedures occurred over a four-month period between November, 1981 and February, 1982.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument was developed to collect the necessary data in this study. The items in the instrument were generated from the research questions. The instrument development process used several sources to construct and validate the items in the instrument which included technical assistance requests regarding certification policies and practices from persons in the field, document analyses (e.g., available state certification policies), reviews of literature, and a panel of reviewers. A first draft of the instrument was constructed and sent to ten (10) reviewers who were selected based on their experiences in the area of certification. Using the suggestions and recommendations of the reviewers, the appropriate revisions were made. A second draft of the instrument was then sent to the reviewers for a final critique. After making a few minor changes in the second draft based on the reviewers' comments, the final version of the survey instrument was produced (see Appendix A). The final instrument provided the respondents with twelve (12) items and directions for completing the survey. Generally, the items had a similar format and produced nominal data (yes

or no responses). In addition, several items requested open-ended responses.

Population

The population for this study consisted of the state vocational special needs consultants from the 50 states, District of Columbia, and trust territories (Puerto Rico, Samoa, Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, and Virgin Islands). The entire population was chosen to participate. The state special needs consultants in some cases may have relatively limited knowledge concerning all areas of certification. However, after considerable inquiry to determine the most appropriate respondents to the survey, the state consultants were selected because they have considerable knowledge in the content area of vocational/special education, particularly in training and personnel preparation. In addition, in a recent survey by the researchers, the state consultants expressed that certification was one of their job sub-functions, especially in the area of providing "technical assistance to certification agencies."

Data Collection

The state vocational special needs consultants' names and addresses were taken from the current national consultants' directory. The surveys and cover letters (see Appendix B) were mailed during the last week of November, 1981, and were to be returned by the fourth week of December, 1981. The state consultants were also requested to include any certification information that their states possessed or had produced. The initial response rate was 40 percent. A follow-up letter (see Appendix C) and another survey was mailed to each

non-respondent during mid-January, 1982 and was to be returned during the first week of February, 1982. The follow-up increased the response rate to 75 percent. During the second week of February, 1982, a telephone follow-up was conducted requesting each non-respondent to return his survey. The data collection process was concluded during the fourth week of February, 1982. The final response rate was 85 percent. The data collection process occurred over a three-month period.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from each of the surveys were collectively analyzed across the states and territories. Descriptive data tables were developed for several of the research questions. The tables report variables, frequencies, and percentages. Generally, the tables and discussion of the findings provide specific data regarding certification options and alternatives, coursework and occupational work experience requirements, and legislative issues and policies relative to vocational/special education certification.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine existing vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the states, District of Columbia, and surrounding territories. The entire population of 55 states and territories were surveyed. The data that were collected focused specifically on the major objectives and research questions developed in this study. Therefore, the following discussion of the findings is concerned with the major objectives and research questions of this study.

Objective I: Determine the extent to which the states are issuing certification for vocational education and special education personnel in the area of vocational/special education.

A. Do the states issue one or more certificates for vocational education personnel, and what are the requirements for certification in the area of vocational/special education?

Fourteen (14) of the 47 state special needs consultants who responded indicated that their states issued one or more certificates for vocational education personnel in the area of vocational/special education. Seventy percent of the responding states do not have a vocational/special education certificate provision for vocational educators. Table 1 presents the requirements for obtaining a vocational/special education certificate in those states reporting such a provision. Also presented are the numbers of states which indicated a particular requirement and the percent response which specifies the proportion or percentage of the 14 states and territories that offer vocational/special education certificates and indicated any one of the requirements listed on the table.

Table 1

Requirements for Obtaining Vocational/Special Education Certification by Vocational Education Personnel in the States

Requirement	Number of States Identified	Percent Response
Coursework in special education	11	79%
Coursework in vocational special needs	10	71%
Periodic inservice coursework	9	64%
Work experience	9	64%
Cross-training between vocational education and special education	6	43%
Workshop attendance	6	43%

N = 47 (Total number of responding state consultants)
n = 14 (Total number of states that issue one or more certificates)

Eleven (11) or about 79 percent of the 14 states with such a credential reported that coursework in special education was a requirement for vocational/special education certification. Typical courses may include the psychology of exceptional children and instructional methods and materials. Vocational special needs coursework (combination of vocational education and special education content) was also required by several states (71%). Work experience and inservice coursework were reported as requirements by nearly two-thirds of the states with this credential. Cross-training between vocational education and special education (vocational educators and special educators are in the same courses) and workshop attendance were each listed by less than 50 percent of the states.

In summary, only 14 of the 47 states and territories reporting data indicated that they issued one or more certificates for vocational education personnel in the area of vocational/special education. The most frequent requirement for certification was coursework in special education. In general, coursework and work experience are the two primary requirements in those states offering certification in vocational/special education.

B. Do the states issue one or more certificates for special education personnel, and what are the requirements for certification in the area of vocational/special education?

Eight (8) of the 47 responding states indicated they issued one or more certificates for special education personnel in the area of vocational/special education. Eighty-three percent of the states did not have a vocational/special education certificate for special educators. Table 2 illustrates the requirements for obtaining a vocational/special education certificate in those states reporting such a provision.

Seventy-five percent of the states which offer certification cited that cross-training between vocational education and special education and/or coursework in vocational special needs were required for vocational/special education certification for special education personnel. Coursework in special education, which may or may not include vocational concepts and content, was listed by almost two-thirds of those states offering the certification option, while occupational work experience was reported by only 50 percent of the states, and inservice coursework and workshop attendance was less frequently required of personnel.

Table 2

Requirements for Obtaining Vocational/Special Education Certification by Special Education Personnel in the States

Requirement	Number of States Identified	Percent Response
Cross-training between vocational education and special education	6	75%
Coursework in vocational special needs	6	75%
Coursework in special education	5	63%
Work experience	4	50%
Periodic inservice coursework	3	38%
Workshop attendance	2	25%

N = 47 (Total number of responding state consultants)
n = 8 (Total number of states that issue one or more certificates)

In summary, only 8 of the 47 states and territories reporting data indicated that they issued one or more certificates for special education personnel in the area of vocational/special education. The most frequent requirement for certification was cross-training between vocational education and special education. As was the case with vocational personnel, coursework and work experience are the two primary requirements in those states offering certification to special education personnel in the area of vocational/special education. However, while the requirements of vocational education and special education personnel are generally similar, to some extent the requirements for each group are used in varying degrees.

Objective II: Assess the extent to which undergraduate and graduate courses are used to meet the requirements of extended certifications (i.e., additional certification, for example, personnel who possess 7-12 vocational education certification and who wish to obtain 7-12 special education certification).

C. Do undergraduate courses meet the requirements for extended certification(s), and may undergraduate and graduate courses be used in combination to meet the requirements of extended certification(s)?

In many states, vocational and special education personnel may apply undergraduate courses toward extended certifications (or extensions of certification). For example, 62 percent of the responding state consultants reported that their states permit undergraduate coursework to be used to satisfy the requirements, at least in part, for extended certification. In addition, 73 percent of the states reported that undergraduate and graduate courses may also be used in combination to meet the requirements for extended certification. That is, for personnel who have not or cannot meet all requirements for extended certification, they may satisfy the remaining requirements with graduate courses which may include on-campus instruction, inservice training, workshops, or seminars. In summary, the requirements for extended certification are generally linked to both undergraduate and graduate training programs in several states.

Objective III: Determine the current special education certification options in the states.

D. What are the levels (e.g., K-6, 7-12) in which the states grant special education certification?

The levels in which the states grant special education certification are presented in Table 3. Also presented is the number of states which indicated a particular level of certification, and the percent

Table 3

Levels of Special Education Certification in the States

Level	Number of States Identified	Percent Response
Elementary (K-6 only)	25	53%
Secondary (7-12 only)	24	51%
K-12	37	79%
Post-secondary or adult (only)	1	2%
K-adult	2	4%

N = 47

response which specifies the proportion or percentage of the 47 states and territories that indicated any one of the levels listed on the table.

Each of the 47 states reported some type of level of special education certification. Thirty-seven states indicated that they provide K-12 certification to special education personnel. Fifty-three percent of the states offer elementary only and 51 percent offer secondary only levels of certification. However, some states noted that they provide all three levels. Only three states have a provision for special education certification at the post-secondary/adult and/or K-adult level. This may be partially explained by the fact that special education has been traditionally elementary level oriented in personnel training activities and programs. Secondary special education has not received significant attention over the past several years. In addition, the federal legislation and state initiatives have been focused on K-12 rather than post-secondary or adult programs. However, the field of

special education will need to deal with the problem of post-secondary/adult certification as handicapped students are further placed in these programs and employment settings. The field of rehabilitation which has focused on post-secondary and adult vocational training could provide some guidance and direction in future certification policy-making.

E. What are the separate areas of special education certification (e.g., mental retardation, learning disabilities) in the states?

The separate areas of special education certification in the states are illustrated in Table 4. The traditional categories or separate areas of special education certification are still common in the states. Certification in hearing impaired, visually impaired, and emotionally disturbed/behaviorally disordered are granted in approximately 75 percent of the states and territories. Personnel may receive certification in educable and trainable mentally handicapped, orthopedically handicapped, or learning disabled in more than 58 percent of the states. The data do not appear to reflect any significant change in certification policy or practice in terms of the noncategorical training programs that have been developed and implemented in several colleges and universities. This seems to suggest that higher education and state department personnel may not (in some states) be directly relating personnel preparation activities with certification practices. This problem tends to magnify as teachers and other personnel move from one state to another and attempt to obtain certification.

Objective IV: Identify the states' vocational education certification policies in terms of occupational work experience and course requirements.

Table 4

Separate Areas of Special Education Certification in the States

Area of Certification	Number of States Identified	Percent Response
Hearing Impaired	37	79%
Visually Impaired	36	77%
Emotionally Disturbed/ Behaviorally Disordered	34	72%
Educable Mentally Handicapped	32	68%
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	29	62%
Orthopedically Impaired	28	60%
Learning Disabled	27	57%
Occupational Therapy	20	43%
Physical Therapy	19	40%
Vocational Coordinator	7	15%
Special Vocational Coordinator	4	9%
Prevocational Coordinator	3	6%

N = 47

NOTE: Several states listed singularly several different areas (27) of certification (e.g., preschool handicapped, gifted, and consulting teacher) and are not included in the Table.

F. Do the states waive occupational work experience requirements for vocational education certification when a specified number of courses is completed, or when licensure is temporary or provisional?

Nine percent of the responding state consultants indicated that occupational work experience requirements for vocational education certification may be waived in lieu of coursework. When vocational

certification is temporary or provisional, nearly one-fourth of the states reported the option of waiving the work experience requirement for coursework. The option of waiving work experience in some states may reflect an apparent difficulty for individuals in meeting certification requirements. Teacher shortages are likely to increase the number of waivers that are made. In addition, those states reporting such waivers may have some general vocational programs such as industrial arts, consumer homemaking, or general business, which commonly have not had extensive work experience requirements for certification. Although similar programs may be included in the state plans for vocational education and may be receiving federal funds, personnel may not be required to have specific occupational work experience in some states. Occupational work experience requirements have been and are currently important issues facing both personnel preparation programs and certification policies.

G. Do the states presently require vocational educators to complete one or more special education courses before receiving certification, and are these additional course requirements necessary for vocational education certification?

Twenty percent of the states reporting data indicated that one or more special education courses are required before receiving vocational certification. Courses may include psychology of exceptional children and instructional methods and materials. Five of the nine states requiring special education courses stated that the course(s) represented additional requirements necessary for vocational certification. Some states who did not specify that they require special education courses may be approaching personnel preparation and certification in

other ways. For example, some states may be using the infusion approach whereby special education is "infused" into existing vocational teacher education courses including methods of instruction, practica, and/or philosophy. This approach is an alternative when curricula are already "overloaded" with requirements.

In summary, 80 percent of the states responding stated that special education courses are not required for vocational education certification. In addition, the extent to which states are using alternative strategies was not clear. It appears that collaboration between vocational education and special education at the SEA level may be minimal.

Objective V: Identify current legislative issues and policies affecting vocational/special education certification in the states.

H. Do the states have existing temporary certification policies that are presently under legislative or state department review and how are current policies perceived by state leadership personnel?

Only 9 of the 47 consultants indicated that they had any temporary certification policies under legislative or state department review. Four of the states claimed that their temporary certification policies were being discontinued. Table 5 presents the state consultants' viewpoints with respect to their states' existing certification policies. One-half of the states responding to the survey felt that their certification policies were appropriate to their states' present needs. This may suggest that while some concern with respect to certification is present, more pressing needs exist and need attention. For example, the need for interagency cooperation may be present in areas more basic than certification. Further, enough information and data may not be available to

Table 5

Attitudes of the State Special Needs Consultants Toward Their States' Existing Certification Policies

Attitude	Number of States Identified	Percent Response
Appropriate to state's needs at this time	23	49%
Inconsistent (e.g., some specific certifications may be more easily attained than others)	12	26%
Too liberal (e.g., a temporary certificate is issued without sufficient preparation on the part of the individual to attain certification)	10	21%
Too difficult (e.g.,some qualified and capable persons who desire and deserve certification may be unable to meet the requirements)	4	9%

N = 47

assist in personnel planning which may help states identify needs, particularly those that relate to both personnel preparation and certification. Approximately 25 percent of the consultants felt that their certification policies were either inconsistent or too liberal. However, less than 10 percent of the consultants indicated that their policies were too difficult or that the requirements were unreasonable to meet. It should also be noted that some consultants had more than one viewpoint on their states' certification policies.

In summary, few states appear to have any active temporary certification policies under legislative or state department review, and those states which did have some are apparently discontinuing them.

Although previous data suggest that personnel preparation and certification are important problems facing SEA personnel, other problems and issues may be given higher priority at this particular time. It should be noted, however, that only 50 percent of the consultants believed their certification policies were appropriate, and almost 50 percent indicated that their policies were inconsistent or too liberal. The implication seems to be that a problem exists and will intensify in many states when other programming issues are at least partly resolved.

1. To what extent is competency-based teacher certification having an impact on certification requirements in the states?

Thirty-six percent of the reporting consultants believe that competency-based teacher certification was having an impact on certification requirements in their states. It is not surprising that over one-third of the states reported this impact since concerns such as basic skills, teacher competency testing, teacher tenure, students' standardized achievement scores, and other issues have been and continue to be much discussed. Some state consultants indicated that while no impact was presently being made, they perceived an impact in the near future.

Competency-based certification may provide an effective means for linking personnel preparation and certification activities. For example, specific competencies could be developed or identified in a particular state which are necessary for vocational educators and special educators who work with handicapped learners in a vocational setting. The planning and development could involve a committee of teacher educators, SEA personnel, LEA personnel, and others. Subsequently,

competencies or skills could be acquired through preservice and inservice training which are specific to SEA certification requirements. Finally, competency testing could take place at colleges and universities, LEAs, or SEAs. It should be noted that colleges and universities only provide a means to certification through courses, practica, and other professional experiences, and that the state grants certification. In summary, competency-based teacher certification could be a feasible approach toward coordinating the means and ends of certifying vocational and special education personnel in the states.

Objective VI: Determine the extent to which the states are issuing or developing vocational/special education certification.

J. Do the states have a vocational/special education certification, and what agencies have established or are presently developing recommendations and/or procedures for certification?

Thirty-four percent of the responding consultants indicated that a vocational/special education certificate was presently being issued in their state in the area of vocational education or special education or in both of these areas. Some of the consultants specified that only a proposal existed at the time. The 28 states which did not have a certificate or proposal indicated some of the agencies that had established or were developing recommendations and/or procedures for vocational/special education certification. The agencies are presented in Table 6.

While some states indicated more than one agency, 28 states reported that they have no certificate or proposal and that no agency has developed recommendations or initiated action for developing policies or guidelines. However, 60 percent of the states that did not have a certificate or proposal stated that colleges or universities and/or state

Table 6

Agencies in the States That Have Developed Recommendations and/or Procedures for Vocational/Special Education Certification

Agency	Number of States Identified	Percent Response
College or University	8	50%
State Department of Vocational Education	8	50%
State Certification Board	2	13%
Professional Standards Commission	2	13%

N = 47
n = 16

departments of vocational education have suggested strategies for developing vocational/special education certification. Many of the consultants were unwilling or unable to explain why their states did not have such a certificate or proposal.

K. Are the states interested in participating in a workshop to develop standards for vocational/special education certification?

Table 7 presents SEA personnel interests or preferences in attending a conference or workshop designed to develop policy, guidelines, and standards for vocational/special education certification.

While some state consultants indicated more than one conference type, the distribution of interests was relatively similar. The greatest interest or preference appears to be in a state level conference as indicated by nearly two-thirds of the consultants. Regional or national conferences were of interest to at least one-half of the states.

Table 7

Interests of the State Consultants in Attending a Conference on Developing Policy, Guidelines, and Standards for Vocational/Special Education Certification

Conference Type	Number of States Identified	Percent Response
State level	31	66%
Regional level	26	55%
National level	24	51%

N = 47

In summary, the majority of states appear to be interested in a conference that will assist them in developing effective vocational/special education certification policies and practices. While state level conferences were most frequently selected, it may also be the most desirable for encouraging and promoting interagency cooperation of SEA personnel. This idea needs further investigation.

L. Do the states have resources that could assist others in developing policies and practices in vocational/special education certification?

Only 23 percent or 11 states reported that they had materials that could assist others in planning and developing vocational/special education certification policies and practices. This appears to confirm the notion that minimal data and information are available to state planning personnel with respect to developing certification policies. The implication is that more information regarding both personnel preparation and certification needs to be developed and become available to state

leadership and planning personnel. Such information may include: exemplary personnel preparation programs, needs assessment and evaluation information, certification models, and interagency models for linking personnel preparation with certification.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine existing vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and trust territories (Puerto Rico, Samoa, Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, and Virgin Islands). In order to examine the central problem more closely, certification policies and practices in the following areas were investigated: certification options and alternatives, coursework, and occupational work experience requirements. A twelve-item survey instrument was developed to achieve the major objectives and answer the research questions of this study. The entire population of 55 state special needs consultants was chosen to participate. After the initial mail survey and subsequent mail and telephone follow-up surveys, the final response rate was 85 percent. The data analysis process included the development of descriptive data tables and a discussion of the findings.

It was not the intent of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of existing vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the states. Further, the study was not concerned with how various groups in the states assess needs, plan, and input into the development of certification policies. The findings are based on the major objectives and research questions developed for this study. The general findings of this study were:

1. Fourteen of the 47 responding states, District of Columbia, and surrounding territories issued one or more certificates for vocational education personnel in the area of vocational/

special education. In those states which do not have such a certificate, some state departments of vocational education and/or colleges and universities have begun to develop recommendations or procedures for vocational/special education certification. The most frequent requirements in those states which offer such certification were coursework in special education and occupational work experience.

2. Eight of the 47 states and territories issued one or more certificates for special education personnel in vocational/special education. The most frequent requirements in those states which offer such certification were cross-training between vocational education and special education and course work in vocational special needs. In general, coursework and occupational work experience were the two major requirements.

3. Approximately two-thirds of the states permitted undergraduate coursework to satisfy the requirements, at least in part, for extended certification; and 74 percent of the states allowed undergraduate and graduate coursework to be used in combination to fulfill the requirements for extended certification.

4. Thirty-seven states provided K-12 special education certification and about one-half of the states offered K-6 only and/or 7-12 only certification. Post-secondary or adult special education certification was virtually non-existent.

5. Greater than three-fourths of the states reporting issued special education certification in the area of hearing impaired or visually impaired; and about one-half of the states offered categorical certification in areas such as educable and mentally handicapped and learning disabled.

6. Four states (9%) reported that occupational work experience requirements may be waived in lieu of coursework for vocational certification; but eleven states (25%) reported the waiver option only when certification was temporary or provisional.

7. Nine states (20%) required vocational educators to complete one or more special education courses before receiving vocational certification and the courses generally represent additional requirements.

8. Only 9 states reported any certification policies under legislative or state department review, and 4 states cited that their temporary certification policies were being discontinued. Forty-nine percent of the state consultants believed that their certification policies and practices were appropriate to the states' needs. Forty-seven percent claimed that their policies were inconsistent and/or too liberal. Four states (9%) reported having certification requirements that were too difficult.

9. Over one-third of the reporting states claimed that competency-based teacher certification was having an impact

on certification policies and practices, and several other states perceived an impact in the near future.

10. Thirty-eight percent of the consultants indicated that their states offered a vocational/special education certificate, and in some states which do not have such a certificate, the state department of vocational education and/or colleges or universities had developed recommendations or procedures.

11. Most state leadership personnel expressed an interest in participating in a state, regional, or national level conference designed to assist them in developing effective vocational/special education policies and practices.

12. Sixty-eight percent of the states reporting indicated that they had limited or no useful materials that could assist them in planning and developing effective vocational/special education certification policies and practices.

Conclusions

The conclusions are based on the findings of this study. They are concerned with determining the existing vocational/special education certification policies and practices in the states and surrounding territories.

1. Most states do not issue vocational/special education certification for vocational education and special education personnel; however, coursework and occupational work experience are the primary requirements in those states offering certification.

2. Undergraduate and/or graduate coursework are commonly used to satisfy requirements for extended certification.

3. Most states offer K-12 special education certification; however, post-secondary or adult special education certification is almost non-existent.

4. Categorical special education certification is predominant in most states, while certification in hearing impaired and visually impaired is most frequent.

5. Very few states waive the occupational work experience requirement for vocational education certification, even when certification is temporary or provisional.

6. A limited number of states require vocational educators to complete one or more special education courses before receiving vocational certification and the course(s) generally represent additional requirements.

7. Only a few states have any certification policies under legislative or state department review; however, about one-half of the state special needs consultants believe that their states' policies are inconsistent and/or too liberal and need development and/or revision.

8. Competency-based teacher certification is having an impact on the certification policies and practices in several states, while many state special needs consultants believe that it will impact their states' in the near future.

9. There is a need for state, regional, and/or national level conferences that could assist state leadership and planning personnel in developing, implementing, and evaluating vocational/special education policies and practices.

10. Useful materials are needed by state leadership and planning personnel to aid them in developing vocational/special education policies and practices.

Recommendations

The findings and conclusions of this study suggested that most states do not have comprehensive vocational/special education certification in terms of either policies or practices. Some states may offer certification in vocational education or special education, require special education courses for vocational certification, or infuse vocational and special education content into existing courses. However, there appears to be a lack of interagency cooperation among agencies in this area. Personnel preparation and certification activities should be more closely coordinated to develop effective certification policies and practices. The need for vocational/special education certification in the states will probably become more important as increasing numbers of handicapped students are mainstreamed into regular vocational programs.

Several general and specific recommendations can be made based on the findings and conclusions of this study. The recommendations which follow are addressed to vocational and special education state leadership and planning personnel including: state directors of vocational education, state directors of special education, state special needs

consultants, state certification board officers, state comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) officers, state legislators, and teacher educators.

1. The states need to examine their existing certification policies regarding both vocational and special education. Interagency cooperation between these agencies needs to occur for developing vocational/special education certification policies, procedures, and practices. For example, vocational and special education should review their present certification requirements and determine how they can be coordinated for persons who will work with handicapped students in vocational programs.

2. State education agency personnel need to more closely collaborate with higher education personnel since it is critical that personnel preparation and certification be interfaced when developing certification policy. State departments grant certification, but universities and colleges provide the means to obtaining certification. Therefore, state directors of vocational education, state directors of special education, state special needs consultants, CSPD officers, state certification board officers, and teacher educators must all be involved in policy formulation.

3. Future vocational/special education policy development should begin or continue to focus more attention at the post-secondary or adult level. This population will continue to

increase, and educators will be required to possess expanded competencies to serve them.

4. Vocational education commonly focuses on "special needs" students' needs or functional learning abilities and problems, rather than their categorical (e.g., mental retardation, learning disabilities) handicaps. Therefore, policy-makers may want to investigate noncategorical vocational/special education certification options.

5. The states which presently have a vocational/special education certification option or have a secondary (7-12) certification in vocational education or special education should review and evaluate their existing requirements. Requirements such as occupational work experience and coursework could be reviewed to assess their appropriateness and/or sufficiency.

6. Policy-makers should examine the current trends and issues related to personnel preparation and training which may also apply to certification policy development. For example, competency-based teacher education may provide a way of coordinating SEA and college and university personnel activities. These personnel could jointly work on statewide needs assessments; develop personnel training plans and programs; and collaborate on developing, implementing, and evaluating vocational/special education certification policy and practices.

7. A federal initiative which standardizes vocational education and special education certification language, terms, and definitions would be helpful for enhancing communication among policy-makers in the states.

8. National, regional, and/or state level conferences are desired and needed by SEA personnel. The Office of Adult and Vocational Education and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services should strongly consider sponsoring a joint national conference that could assist state leadership personnel in developing, implementing, and evaluating effective vocational/special education certification policy. At such a conference, state leadership personnel including state directors, state special needs consultants, CSPD officers, state certification board officers, and teacher educators could work together in producing an "action plan" by identifying problems and issues, writing goals and objectives, prescribing activities, and planning product development. The major outcome of the conference should be for each participating state to develop a workable plan for establishing vocational/special education certification. Other options may include conducting conferences at the regional or state levels. These more "local" types of conferences may provide states a better opportunity for getting the necessary people together and involved. All these options need further investigation to ensure the best mode of service delivery.

9. State leadership and planning personnel need useful information and materials for assisting them in developing vocational/special education certification policy. Colleges and universities, research coordinating units, national research centers, and other agencies should consider initiating research and development activities in this area. For example, vocational/special education certification models, policy papers, guidelines and best practices documents, problems and issues studies, and other activities and products are needed by state planning personnel. Dissemination of similar materials to appropriate state leadership personnel is also of major importance.

10. Additional studies need to be conducted which should more closely examine and describe the specific certification requirements and policies of those states which have vocational/special education certification.

In summary, the development of vocational/special education certification policies which are coordinated with personnel preparation planning and activities is essential for adequately serving handicapped students in vocational and employment settings. For effective policy to be developed and implemented, vocational education and special education personnel at the SEA and higher education levels will need to collaborate. Several activities were discussed in which these personnel could work together. Handicapped learners will be more adequately served in vocational education if states improve, expand, or begin to develop effective vocational/special education certification policies and

practices which are closely linked to personnel preparation and training.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Vocational/Special Education Certification Study

DIRECTIONS: Please complete the survey by placing a check mark [✔] in the appropriate space. Feel free to make any comments which you believe may contribute to this study in the spaces provided. For the purposes of this study, the terms vocational/special education and vocational special needs education are used synonymously.

1. a) Does your state issue one or more certificates for vocational education personnel in the area of vocational/special education?

YES ____ NO ____

b) If yes, as a part of vocational/special education certification for vocational education personnel, does your state require:

	YES	NO
• Work experience verification	____	____
• Coursework in special education	____	____
• Cross-training between vocational education and special education	____	____
• Vocational special needs coursework	____	____
• Periodic inservice coursework	____	____
• Workshop attendance	____	____

• Other (please specify): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. a) Does your state issue one or more certificates for special education personnel in the area of vocational/special education?

YES ____ NO ____

b) If yes, as a part of vocational/special education certification for special education personnel, does your state require:

	YES	NO
• Work experience verification	____	____
• Coursework in special education	____	____
• Cross-training between vocational education and special education	____	____
• Vocational special needs coursework	____	____
• Periodic inservice coursework	____	____
• Workshop attendance	____	____

• Other (please specify): _____

_____

_____

_____

3. a) Do undergraduate courses meet the requirements for extended certifications (i.e., additional certification, for example, personnel who possess 7-12 vocational education certification and who wish to obtain 7-12 special education certification)?

YES ____ NO ____

b) May graduate and undergraduate courses be used in combination to meet the requirements for extended certifications?

YES ____ NO ____

4. At what levels does your state grant special education certification:

	YES	NO
• Elementary (K-6 only)	____	____
• Secondary (7-12 only)	____	____
• K-12	____	____
• Post-secondary or adult (only)	____	____
• K-Adult	____	____

5. Please indicate which of the following are separate areas of special education certification at any level in your state:

	YES	NO
• Learning Disabilities	____	____
• Emotionally Disturbed or Behaviorally Disordered	____	____
• Hearing Impaired	____	____
• Visually Impaired	____	____
• Educable Mentally Handicapped	____	____
• Trainable Mentally Handicapped	____	____
• Orthopedically Impaired	____	____
• Occupational Therapy	____	____
• Physical Therapy	____	____
• Prevocational Coordinator	____	____
• Vocational Adjustment Coordinator	____	____
• Vocational Coordinator	____	____
• Special Vocational Coordinator	____	____
• Vocational Evaluator	____	____

• Other (please specify): _____

_____

_____

_____

6. a) Does your state waive the work experience requirement for vocational education certification licensure when a specified number of courses is completed?

YES ____ NO ____

b) Does your state waive the work experience requirement for vocational education licensure when licensure is temporary or provisional?

YES ____ NO ____

7. a) Does your state presently require vocational educators to complete one or more special education courses before receiving certification?

YES ____ NO ____

b) If yes, do special education course(s) represent additional requirements necessary for vocational education certification?

YES ____ NO ____

8. a) Does your state have any existing temporary certification policies that are presently under legislative or state department review?

YES ____ NO ____

b) If yes, please describe: _____

_____

_____

c) Do you believe that existing certification policies are:

	YES	NO
• appropriate to your state's needs at this time	____	____
• too liberal; for example, a temporary certificate is issued without sufficient preparation on the part of the individual attaining the certification	____	____
• too difficult; for example, some qualified and capable persons who desire and deserve certification may be unable to meet the requirements	____	____
• inconsistent; for example, some specific certifications may be more easily attained than others	____	____

9. a) Is competency-based teacher certification having an impact on certification requirements in your state?

YES ____ NO ____

b) If yes, please comment upon this impact: _____

_____

_____

_____

10. a) Does your state have a vocational/special education certification?

YES ____ NO ____

b) If no, are any of the following agencies in your state presently developing (or have established) recommendations and/or procedures for vocational/special education certification:

	YES	NO
• Colleges or Universities	____	____
• State Department Certification Board	____	____
• State Department of Vocational-Technical Education	____	____
• Local Education Agency	____	____
• Professional Standards Commission	____	____

• Other (please specify): _____

_____

_____

c) If your state does not have a vocational/special education certification, please indicate why.

_____

_____

_____

11. Would you be willing to attend or send a representative from your agency to participate in a workshop to develop standards for a vocational/special education certification at any of the following levels?

	YES	NO
a) state level	____	____
b) regional level	____	____
c) national level	____	____

12. Do you have any useful information and materials that may help explain the issues, policies, and practices involved in vocational/special education certification?

YES ____ NO ____

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

College of Education
Department of Vocational
and Technical Education
CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

345 Education Building
1310 South Sixth Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820
(217) 333-2325

APPENDIX B

November 31, 1981

Dear State Special Needs Consultant:

Over the past few years, increased emphasis in the states has been focused on developing policies and standards for personnel preparation and certification of vocational/special education teachers and other support personnel. Several states have begun to deal with this task. The Leadership Training Institute (LTI) staff has received several technical assistance requests from the states for baseline knowledge and information for developing certification policies and practices. However, few studies have been conducted and minimal information is available to assist states in establishing effective certification policies and practices for certifying vocational/special education personnel.

The LTI staff is currently conducting a policy study that is intended to assess the present status of vocational/special certification policies in the states. The expectation is that the information from the study will assist state leadership personnel to develop effective policies for certifying vocational/special education personnel. The LTI staff would appreciate, therefore, if you would please take a few moments to complete the enclosed survey and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. We need to receive your completed survey by December 31, 1981.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at (217) 333-2325. Your cooperation and assistance in this effort is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James P. Greenan, Ph.D.
Research and Development
Coordinator
Leadership Training Institute/
Vocational and Special Education

JPG:sfb
Enclosures
cc: Charlotte Conaway

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

College of Education
Department of Vocational
and Technical Education
CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

345 Education Building
1310 South Sixth Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820
(217) 333-2325

APPENDIX C

January 15, 1982

Dear State Special Needs Consultant:

Six weeks ago you received a request from us to complete a vocational/special education certification survey. We have enclosed an additional copy of the survey. It would be appreciated if you would complete the survey and return it to us by February 5, 1982. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at (217) 333-2325. Your cooperation and assistance in this effort is greatly appreciated! Thank you.

Sincerely,

James P. Greenan, Ph.D.
Research and Development
Coordinator
Leadership Training Institute/
Vocational and Special Education

JPG:jm
Enclosures